

## Message Text

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60

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 EB-11 AGR-20 DRC-01 /123 W

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R 252239Z AUG 74

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0069

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0128

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PDEV

SUBJECT: TRIP TO THE HIGHLANDS

1. PEOPLE IN THE HIGHLANDS EXPRESSED VIEWS TO ME  
ON A TRIP TO THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS, CHIMBU AND THE  
EASTERN HIGHLANDS (AUGUST 11 - 15) AS FOLLOWS:

A) INDEPENDENCE: HIGHLANDERS STILL THINK INDEPENDENCE  
IS COMING TOO SOON, BUT THEY THINK IT IS INEVITABLE  
SOMETIME IN THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS AND ARE RECONCILED  
TO IT.

B) CONSTITUTION: I HEARD GRUMBLING IN SOME AREAS THAT  
HIGHLANDERS WERE NOT ADEQUATELY CONSULTED BY CPC AND  
IN OTHER AREAS THAT HIGHLANDERS' VIEWS WERE IGNORED  
AFTER BEING SOLICITED BY THE CPC, BUT IN GENERAL  
THERE WAS VERY LITTLE INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT.

C) CITIZENSHIP: VERY LITTLE INTEREST COULD BE NOTED  
AND VAST MAJORITY REPORTEDLY HAS NO REAL COMPRE-  
HENSION OF THE CONCEPT.

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D) DISTRICT GOVERNMENT: A KEEN INTEREST IN INCREASED AUTHORITY FOR THE DISTRICTS WAS EVIDENT. HIGHLANDERS SEEM CONVINCED THEY CAN MAKE BETTER DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR OWN AFFAIRS THAN ARE NOW BEING MADE IN PORT MORESBY.

E) LAW AND ORDER: THIS IS THE MAJOR PROBLEM IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS AND CHIMBU, ACCORDING TO THE TWO DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS. TRIBAL WARFARE IS A MATTER OF DEEP CONCERN IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS AND RENEWED FIGHTING IN A SMOLDERING TRIBAL DISPUTE BROKE OUT THE DAY I ARRIVED. THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER BELIEVES THE TRIBES MAY BE FIGHTING TO EXPAND THEIR LAND HOLDINGS IN THE BELIEF THAT HOLDINGS WILL BE FROZEN AS OF THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE. IN CHIMBU THERE HAS BEEN ONLY ONE OUTBREAK OF TRIBAL WARFARE IN PAST FOURTEEN MONTHS, BUT PAYBACK KILLINGS ARE INCREASING AS THE RESULT OF INCREASING AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS ON THE HIGHLANDS HIGHWAY. BOTH DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS WERE OPENLY CRITICAL OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO TAKE PROMPT AND STERN ACTION AGAINST OFFENDERS.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND HOOLIGANISM IS INCREASING IN ALL THREE DISTRICTS. INCREASING CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IS AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN LAW AND ORDER PROBLEMS.

LAW AND ORDER SITUATION MUCH BETTER IN EASTERN HIGHLANDS WHERE, AT LEAST AROUND GOROKA, ECONOMY IS BETTER DEVELOPED, THAN IN OTHER TWO DISTRICTS.

F) REGIONAL TENSIONS: THE ANIMOSITY BETWEEN CHIMBUS AND OTHER HIGHLANDERS WAS OBVIOUS. THIS PROBLEM WILL WORSEN AS THE VISIBLE POPULATION PRESSURE LEADS INCREASING NUMBERS OF CHIMBUS TO LEAVE THEIR DISTRICT. MANY INSTANCES OF THE FRICTION BETWEEN COASTAL PEOPLE AND THE HIGHLANDERS WERE ALSO RECOUNTED.

G) ECONOMIC: THE HIGH PRICE OF COFFEE HAS BROUGHT  
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NEW PROSPERITY TO THE AREA, AND THERE IS A DISTINCT RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC INCENTIVE, BUT THE SHIFT TO CASH CROPS AND THE INCREASING PURCHASE OF IMPORTED FOODS (RICE, TINNED FISH AND TINNED MEAT) COULD LEAD TO A CRITICAL SITUATION IF THE PRICE OF COFFEE SHOULD FALL SIGNIFICANTLY AS THE PRICE OF IMPORTED FOOD CONTINUES TO RISE.  
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## Message Attributes

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